



**Montana Statewide
Dropout and Graduate
Report**

2007- 08 School Year

May 2009



The Montana Office of Public Instruction, Denise Juneau, Superintendent

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Introduction

The Montana School Accreditation Standards (10.55.603, ARM) require schools to do follow-up studies of graduates and students no longer in attendance. This report provides information on students who graduated or dropped out of Montana public, state-funded and nonpublic, accredited schools, during the 2007-08 school year. Increasing dropout rates and decreasing completion and graduation rates have spurred much research into this subject in Montana and nationwide. The reports mentioned below are representative of the research but are far from the only organizations doing research in this field.

The Impact of Dropping Out of School

Consequences of dropping out include increased chances of being in poverty, being unemployed, being on public assistance, being in prison or on death row, being divorced, or being a single parent according to a 2006 study funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation called *The Silent Epidemic, Perspectives of High School Dropouts*. On average, high school dropouts earn \$9,200 less per year than high school graduates, and about one million dollars less over a lifetime than college graduates. Dropouts were three times more likely than college graduates to be unemployed in 2004, 40% of dropouts receive some type of government assistance, and dropouts are eight times more likely to be in jail or prison than a high school graduate. If a dropout resorts to a life of crime and drugs, the lifetime cost to the nation is between \$1.7 to \$2.3 million.

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education the lost lifetime earnings in Montana from dropouts this year alone total nearly \$830 million. Montana would save more than \$29.8 million in health care costs over the lifetime of each class of dropouts. The economy of Montana would see a combination of crime related savings and additional revenue of about \$19.6 million each year if the male high school graduation rate would increase by just 5%.

Why They Dropout

There is no sole cause that can conclusively foretell who is at risk of dropping out. In *The Silent Epidemic, Perspectives of High School Dropouts*, the top five reasons for dropping out were classes were not interest-

ing, missed too many days and could not catch up, bad influences (hanging out with the wrong crowd), had too much freedom (both from parents and schools), and failing grades.

In the survey of high school dropouts contained within *The Silent Epidemic, Perspectives of High School Dropouts*, 88% had passing grades with 62% having "C's and above"; 58% dropped out with two years or less to complete high school (58% of Montana's dropouts were in 11th or 12th grade); 81% recognized that graduating from high school was vital to their success; and 74% would have stayed in school if they had to do it over again. The amount of homework a child does as night can indicate the chances of a child dropping out. In the same survey 80% of students, who dropped out, did less than an hour of home work each day in high school.



Graduate and Dropout Definitions and Data Collections

Traditionally, each fall, schools report graduate data for all high schools and dropout data for grades 7 through 12 by gender and race/ethnicity categories for the previous school year. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), greatly increased accountability for student academic achievement for all public schools. The determination of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under NCLB requires that public high and 7-8 schools disaggregate both dropout and graduate data not only by gender and race/ethnicity, but also by the following subgroups: economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, limited English proficient, and migrant. In addition, public high schools must also report graduate data by whether or not graduates graduated "in the standard number of years" (i.e., "on-time"). A non-standard graduate is a student taking longer than 4 years to complete and does not have an IEP allowing for additional time.

Graduate Definitions and Data Collection

Montana accredited high schools report graduate numbers to the OPI each fall for the previous school year using the definition in the box to the right.

Dropout Definitions and Data Collection

Dropout rates can be calculated and reported in three different ways: event rates (snapshot of those who drop out in a single year), status rates (proportion of population who have not completed school and are not enrolled), and cohort rates (a more comprehensive picture which follows a sample group of students over time and generalizes their rate to a larger group). The collection method used in this report is an event rate adapted from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) at the U.S. Department of Education and is consistent with the requirements of the NCES Common Core of Data (CCD) reporting.

Data Limitations

Because the number of students enrolled for small schools and racial minority groups is relatively low, small annual changes in data can cause wide variations in annual completion, graduation, and dropout rates. For example, in a class with 10 students, one dropout would translate to a 10 % dropout rate. A more realistic indicator for small schools and racial minority groups is an average of several years. Montana has developed a student information system and is now able to track students across schools and school years.

Beginning in 2006-07, the process for counting dropouts became more precise by putting into effect Montana's State Student Information System, AIM (Achievement in Montana), reducing differences in school translation of the dropout definition. AIM documents pupil migration into and out of the PK-12 educational structure. Data about pupil migrations are used by AIM to determine if a student is a dropout or not. In AIM, dropout counts are based primarily on AIM enrollment records and AIM end status. The 2007-08 school year dropout and graduation numbers were the first to go through a thorough quality assurance process, which included sending the complete dropout and completion numbers to the school for signature by their Authorized Representative confirming dropout and completion numbers.

Graduates are the count of individuals who:

- 1) completed the high school graduation requirements of a school district, including early graduates, during the previous school year,
or
- 2) completed the high school graduation requirements of a school district at the end of summer prior to the current school year.

General Education Development Test (GED) recipients are not counted as graduates.

Standard Number of Years (i.e., "On-time") Graduate is an individual who:

- 1) completes a district's graduation requirements in four years or less from the time an individual enrolled in the 9th grade,
or
- 2) has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) allowing for more than four years to graduate.

Dropouts are the count of individuals who:

- 1) were enrolled in school on the date of the previous year's October enrollment count or at some time during the previous school year and were not enrolled on the date of the current school year October count;
or
- 2) were not enrolled at the beginning of the previous school year but were expected to enroll and did not re-enroll during the year ("no show") and were not enrolled on the date of the current school year October count;
and
- 3) have not graduated from high school or completed a state or district-approved high school educational program;
and
- 4) have not transferred to another school, been temporarily absent due to a school-recognized illness or suspension, or died.



Analysis of Montana 2007-08 Dropout Rate

Calculating a Dropout Rate

Dropout rates are calculated by dividing the number of dropouts as defined above by the October enrollment total. Dropout rates vary for disaggregated student groups (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender). Calculating and analyzing disaggregated dropout rates is key to determining if certain groups of students are more likely to drop out and can be used in developing and targeting dropout prevention efforts.

- Montana Office of Public Instruction implemented a Student Records Confidentiality Policy on February 1, 2008 that prohibits the release of non-directory information for counts under ten. This includes racial/ethnic, dropout, and completer and graduate sub-groups. Counts under ten will be indicated by the "<10" symbol in all of the applicable tables in this document.

2007-08 Montana Statewide Dropout Rate Summary

- Montana accredited schools reported that 2,540 students dropped out of grades 7 through 12 during the 2007-08 school year. The corresponding October enrollment was 69,943 yielding a dropout rate of 3.6% for the 2007-08 school year. (See Table 1 on following page.)

- The 2007-08 dropout rate for Montana grades 7 and 8 was relatively low (0.3%), but represents 65 students leaving school.
- The 2007-08 dropout rate for Montana high schools was 5.2%.
- Dropouts increased this year due to an increase in accountability in the student information system (AIM) and quality control procedures.
- Peak dropout rates have traditionally been observed in 10th grade, when many students turn 16 and students can legally exit the school system. Section 20-5-102(1), Montana Code Annotated states:
"Except as provided in [Montana Code Annotated §20-5-102(2)], any parent, guardian, or other person who is responsible for the care of any child who is 7 years of age or older prior to the first day of school in any school fiscal year shall cause the child to be instructed in the program prescribed by

the board of public education pursuant to

Dropout Rate Formula

Dropout Rate = Number of dropouts/October enrollment X 100

Example:

The 2007-08 Dropout Rate for Montana Accredited Schools =
2,540 Dropouts for grades 7 through 12, divided by
69,943 students enrolled in October 2007, multiplied by
100 = 3.6%.

20-7-111 until the later of the following dates:

- (a) the child's 16th birthday;
- (b) the date of completion of the work of the 8th grade."

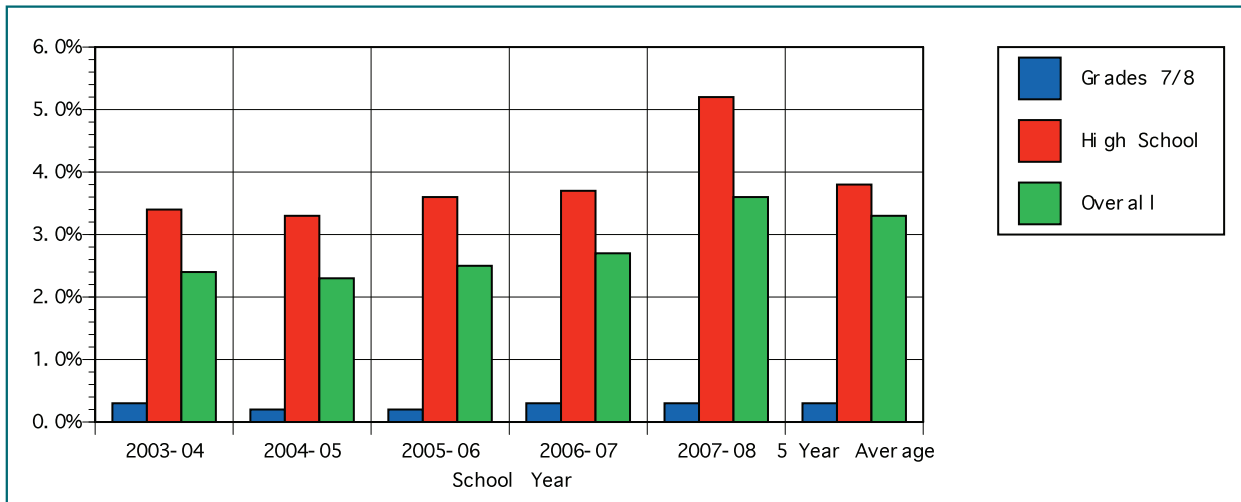
For the 2007-08 school year, however, peak dropout rates were observed in 12th grade with 11th grade not far behind.

- Males drop out of school at a higher rate than females. Males represent 51% of the total school enrollment for grades 7 through 12 and 55% of the dropouts, whereas females represent 49% of the total school enrollment for grades 7 through 12 and 45% of the dropouts.
- For the 2007-08 school year, American Indian students represented 10.7% of the total school enrollment for grades 7 through 12, but account for 24.1% of the total dropouts.
 - The 2007-08 American Indian dropout rate for Montana grades 7 and 8 was 1.3%.
 - The 2007-08 American Indian dropout rate for Montana high schools was 11.5%.
 - The American Indian Dropout rate increased by 3.0%, while the dropout rate went up 0.8% for White students from the 2006-07.
 - The five year average for all students increased by 0.8% to 3.3%.

Table 1 2007-08 Montana Dropout Rate Summary			
	Dropout Rates	Dropout Count	Enrollment
Overall Total	3.6%	2,540	69,943
HS Total	5.2%	2,475	47,885
Gr 12	6.4%	730	11,406
Gr 11	6.1%	707	11,584
Gr 10	5.1%	624	12,326
Gr 9	3.1%	386	12,515
Ungraded* HS	51.9%	28	54
7 & 8 Total	0.3%	65	22,058
Gr 8	0.4%	43	11,192
Gr 7	0.2%	22	10,865
Ungraded* 7-8	0.0%	<10	1
Gender			
Male	3.9%	1,392	35,920
Female	3.4%	1,148	34,023
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian	8.2%	612	7,457
Asian	2.3%	17	737
Hispanic	4.4%	70	1,594
Black	3.7%	20	546
Pacific Islander	3.8%	<10	159
White	3.1%	1,815	59,450

* "A class that is not organized on the basis of grade grouping and has no standard grade designation."
(NCES)

Figure 1: Montana Dropout Rates - 2003-04 to 2007-08



Dropout Rates for Student Subgroups

Since dropout rates can vary greatly among certain student populations, calculating and analyzing disaggregated dropout rates is key in developing and targeting dropout prevention strategies. The data collected by the OPI allows for analysis of dropout rates by grade, gender, race/ethnicity, and various types of schools.

Dropout Rates by Gender

In Montana schools, more males than females are enrolled at every grade level except 7th grade. For the 2007-08 school year, about 51% of the total school enrollment for grades 7 through 12 was male and 49% was female. Males have also traditionally had higher dropout rates than females for most grade levels.

Analysis of Dropout Rates by Gender

- Consistent with previous years, the 2007-08 dropout rate for grades 9 through 12 for males, 5.5%, was greater than for females, 4.8% (see Table 2).
- The 2007-08 dropout rate for grades 7 through 8 for males, 0.3%, was the same for females.

Table 2
2007-08 Montana Dropout Rates by Grade and Gender

Grade	Dropout Rates			Dropout Count			Enrollment		
	Male	Female	Statewide	Male	Female	Statewide	Male	Female	Statewide
HS Total	5.5%	4.8%	5.2%	1,360	1,115	2,475	24,539	23,346	47,885
Grade 12	7.0%	5.7%	6.4%	407	323	730	5,784	5,622	11,406
Grade 11	6.4%	5.8%	6.1%	378	329	707	5,905	5,679	11,584
Grade 10	5.4%	4.7%	5.1%	339	285	624	6,314	6,012	12,326
Grade 9	3.5%	2.7%	3.1%	226	160	386	6,503	6,012	12,515
Ungraded* HS	30.3%	85.7%	51.9%	10	18	28	33	21	54
7 & 8 Total	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	32	33	65	11,046	11,012	22,058
Grade 8	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	21	22	43	5,786	5,406	11,192
Grade 7	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	11	11	22	5,259	5,606	10,865
Ungraded* 7-8	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<10	<10	0	1	0	1
Overall Total	3.9%	3.3%	3.6%	1,392	1,148	2,540	35,585	34,358	69,943

- The male dropout rate stayed the same in grades 7-8 and increased 1.3% in grades 9-12. For females the dropout rate stayed the same in the grades 7-8 but increased 1.6 % in grades 9-12. Dropout Rates for males and females increased in all high school grades. This increase is due to improved dropout data collection procedures, including the new student information system (AIM) and increased emphasis on dropout data with regard to new federal accountability requirements for public high schools (see Table 3 and Figures 2 and 3 on the following page).

Table 3 Montana Dropout Rates by Grade Level and Gender for Five Years												
	Dropout Rates						Dropout Count					
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	5-yr Avg	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	5-yr Total
7 & 8 Total	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	81	37	48	62	65	293
Male	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	35	21	29	30	32	147
Female	0.4%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	46	16	19	32	33	146
HS Total	3.4%	3.3%	3.6%	3.7%	5.2%	3.8%	1,672	1,653	1,776	1,834	2,475	9,410
Male	3.7%	3.6%	3.9%	4.2%	5.5%	4.2%	952	919	984	1,059	1,360	5,274
Female	3.0%	3.1%	3.3%	3.2%	4.8%	3.5%	720	734	792	775	1,115	4,136
Overall Total	2.4%	2.3%	2.5%	2.7%	3.6%	3.3%	1,753	1,690	1,824	1,896	2,540	9,703
Male	2.6%	2.5%	2.7%	3.0%	3.9%	3.6%	987	940	1,013	1,089	1,392	5,421
Female	2.1%	2.1%	2.3%	2.3%	3.4%	3.0%	766	750	811	807	1,148	4,282

Figure 2: Dropout Rates by Gender for Grades 7-8

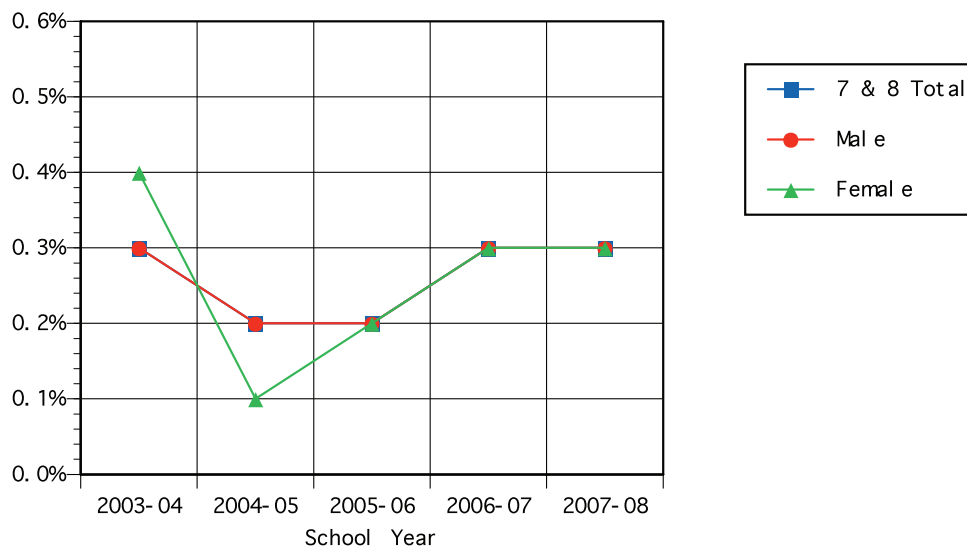
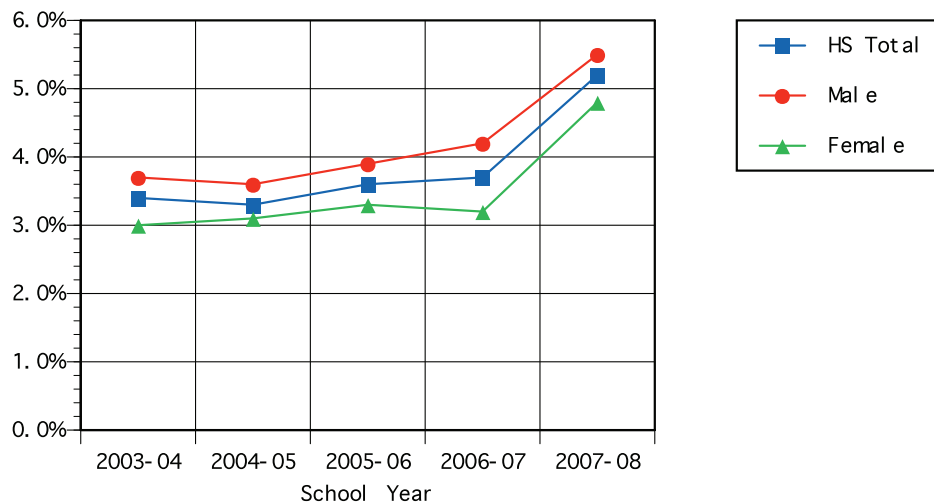
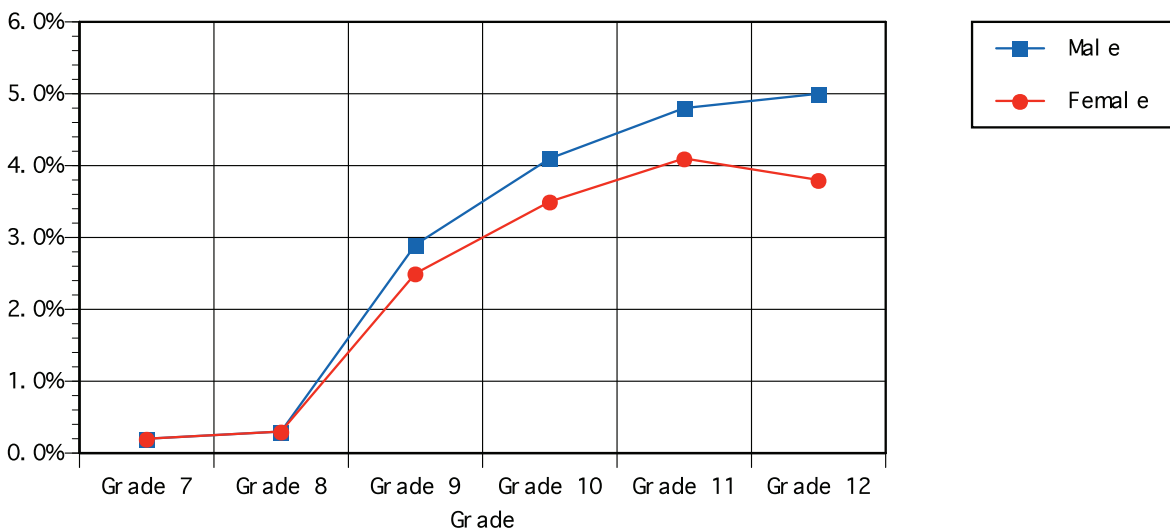


Figure 3: Dropout Rates by Gender Grades 9-12



- As illustrated below in Figure 4, females drop out at a lower rate at every grade level than males except for the 7th and 8th grade where they are the same.
- Peak dropout rates for females are observed in 11th grade and then decrease for 12th grade. Dropout rates for males, however, increase steadily through grade 12.

Figure 4: Five Year Dropout Rates by Gender and Grade



Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity Categories

Dropout rates vary by race/ethnicity categories, and for some minority groups, are higher than the dropout rates for White students. For the 2007-08 school year, Montana school enrollment for grades 7 through 12 included 85.0% White students, 10.7% American Indians, 1.1% Asians, 2.3% Hispanics, 0.8% Blacks, and 0.2% Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders. Because the enrollment of some minority groups is low, annual dropout rates for these groups may vary widely from year to year. Averages of a period of years are more realistic indicators of the dropout rates.

Analysis of Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity Categories

- Consistent with previous years, the 2007-08 dropout rate for American Indian students was greater than the statewide average as well as that of White students. (see Table 4).
- For the 2007-08 school year, the combined race/ethnicity categories of Asian, Hispanic, Black, and Pacific Islander accounted for only 113 dropouts from grades 7 through 12. The corresponding October enrollment was 3,036, yielding a dropout rate of 3.8%. Because the number of students enrolled for these race/ethnicity categories is low, annual dropout rates often vary widely from year to year, even when totaled at the state level. An average dropout rate utilizing dropout and enrollment data from multiple years is a more accurate indicator for these small groups (see Table 5).

Table 4
2007-08 Montana Dropout Rates by Race/Ethnicity Categories

	Dropout Rates			Dropout Count			Enrollment		
	Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Total	Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Total	Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Total
American Indian	1.3%	11.5%	8.2%	32	580	612	2,406	5,051	7,457
Asian	0.0%	3.3%	2.3%	<10	17	17	215	522	737
Hispanic	0.4%	6.5%	4.4%	<10	68	70	542	1,052	1,594
Black	0.0%	6.1%	3.7%	<10	20	20	220	326	546
Pacific Islander	0.0%	6.1%	3.8%	<10	<10	<10	61	98	159
White	0.2%	4.4%	3.1%	31	1,784	1,815	18,614	40,836	59,450
Overall	0.3%	5.2%	3.6%	65	2,475	2,540	22,058	47,885	69,943

- On average, American Indian students drop out of grades 7 and 8 at a rate 14 times that of White students and out of high school at a rate more than 2.5 times that of White students.

Table 5
Montana Dropouts by Race/Ethnicity Categories for Five Years

Category	7 th & 8 th Grade Dropout Rates						High School Dropout Rates					
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	5-yr Avg	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	5-yr Avg
American Indian	2.2%	0.9%	1.3%	1.2%	1.3%	1.4%	8.1%	8.4%	8.2%	7.2%	11.5%	8.7%
Asian	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	1.7%	1.1%	1.3%	3.3%	1.8%
Hispanic	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	5.1%	4.3%	5.2%	6.6%	6.5%	5.6%
Black	0.6%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	5.9%	2.2%	6.0%	5.2%	6.1%	5.1%
Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	3.0%	1.3%	2.4%	6.1%	3.7%
All Minority	1.7%	0.7%	0.9%	0.2%	1.0%	1.1%	7.0%	6.8%	6.5%	6.5%	9.8%	7.5%
White	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	2.8%	2.7%	3.0%	3.3%	4.4%	3.2%
Statewide	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	3.4%	3.3%	3.6%	3.7%	5.2%	3.8%

- In the past five years, American Indian students represented only 11.4% of the total school enrollment for grades 7 through 8, but accounted for 63.5% of the dropouts. For grades 9 through 12, American Indian students represented 10.4% of the total school enrollment and 23.4% of the dropouts.

A Closer Look at American Indian Dropout Rates

- Montana has seven Indian reservations and one landless tribe. The American Indian race/ethnicity category represents the largest minority group in the state.
- For the past few years, Montana high school dropout rates, including those for American Indian students had been on the decline. For the 2007-08 school year, American Indian dropout rates increased at the 7-8 level by 0.01% and at the high school level by 4.3%. At the 7-8 level, the 2007-08 figure of 1.3% is almost a full percentage point lower than the 2003-04 figure. White dropout rates stayed the same at the 7-8 level and increased at the 9-12 level during the 2007-08 school year. This increase is due to improved dropout data collection procedures, including the new student information system (AIM) and increased emphasis placed on dropout data with regard to federal accountability requirements for public high schools. (See Figures 5 and 6 on the following page.)

Figure 5: Dropout Rates for Select Race/Ethnicity Categories for Grades 7-8

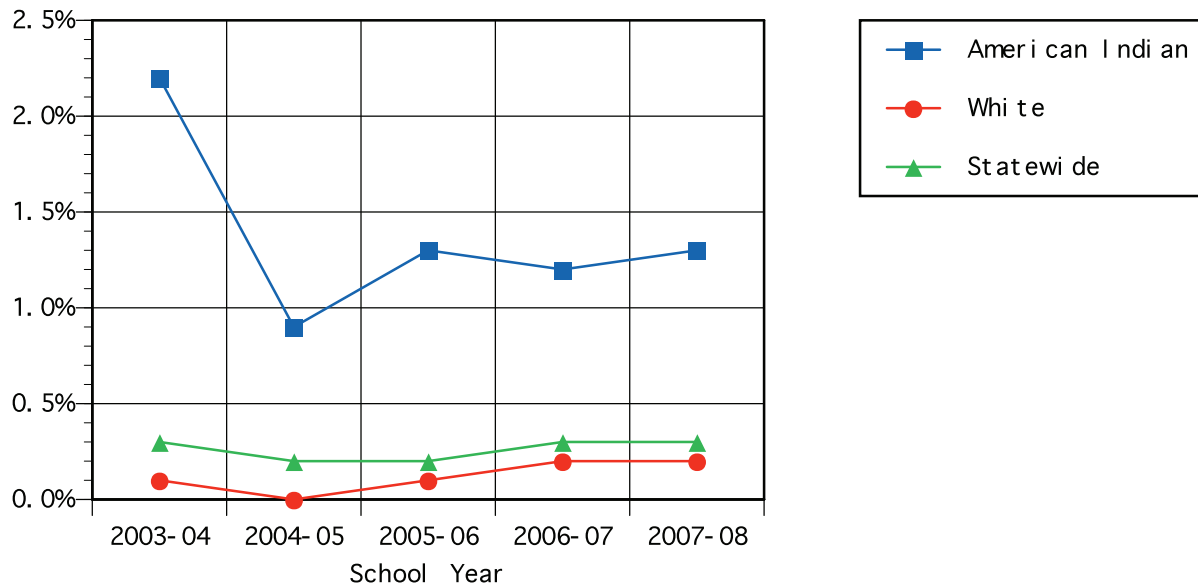
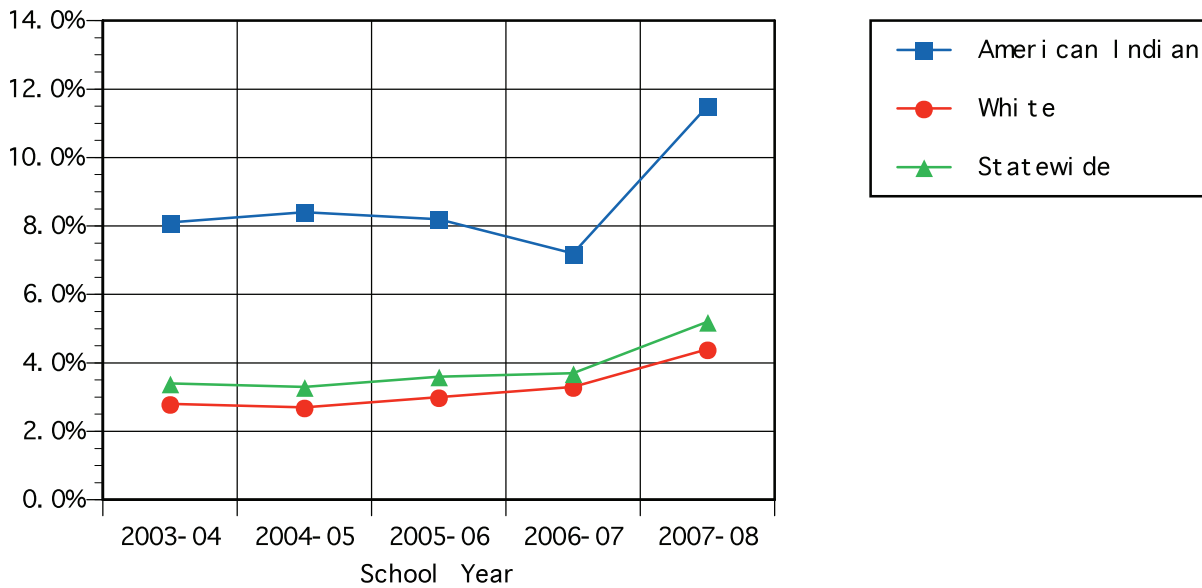
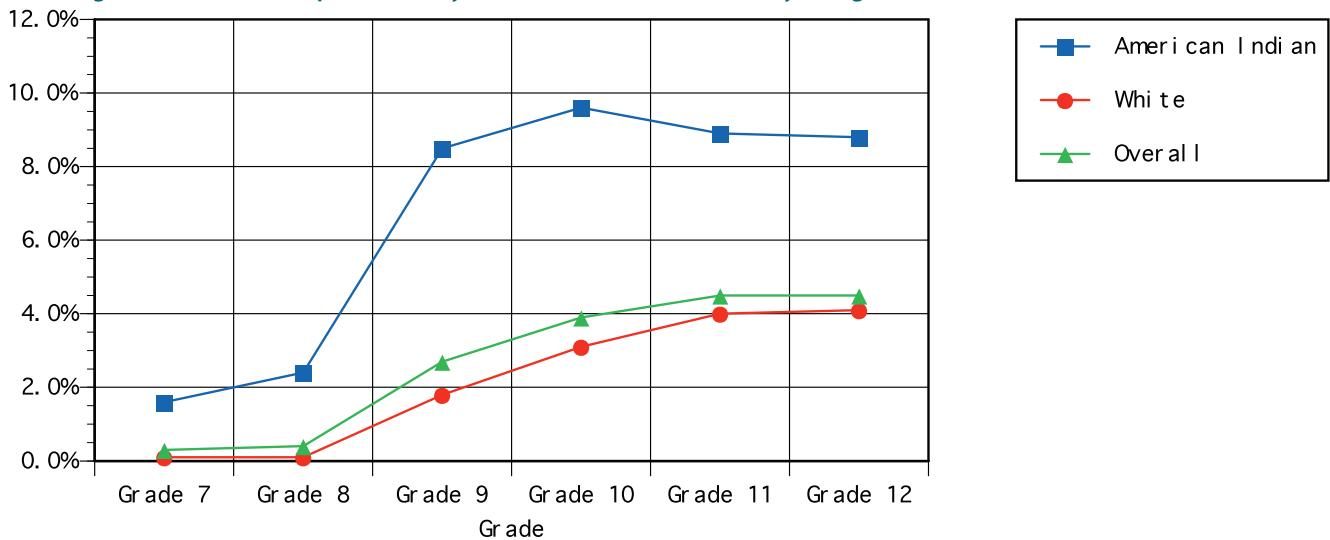


Figure 6: Dropout Rates for Select Race/Ethnicity Categories for Grades 9-12



- As illustrated below in Figure 7, White students drop out at a much lower rate at every grade level than American Indian students. Peak dropout rates for Whites are observed around the 11th and 12th grades, whereas, dropout rates for American Indians peak a year earlier in grade 10. The highest number of American Indians dropout in the 9th grade and Whites in the 11th grade. At the 11th and 12th grade levels, the American Indian dropout rate is more than double the rate of Whites. The American Indian dropout rate is 4.7 times higher for 9th grade students than for White 9th grade students.

Figure 7: Five Year Dropout Rates by Grade for Select Race Ethnicity Categories



- Although, in general, males drop out of school at a higher rate than females, this gender difference is not observed for the American Indian population at the grade 7-8 level. As illustrated in Figure 8, for the past five years, American Indian females have dropped out at a higher rate for grades 7-8 in three of the five years.
- The dropout rates for American Indian males and females showed a sharp increase in 2007-08. At this time it is not known if this increase is real or if it is the result of a more accurate reporting system.
- On the other hand, the dropout rates for Whites have stayed about the same with both genders showing an increase during the 2007-08 school year. Here too, the female dropout count and/or rate has been the same, or more, than that of males at the 7/8 grade level over the last few years.

Figure 8: Dropout Rates for Select Race/Ethnicity Categories by Gender Grades 7-8

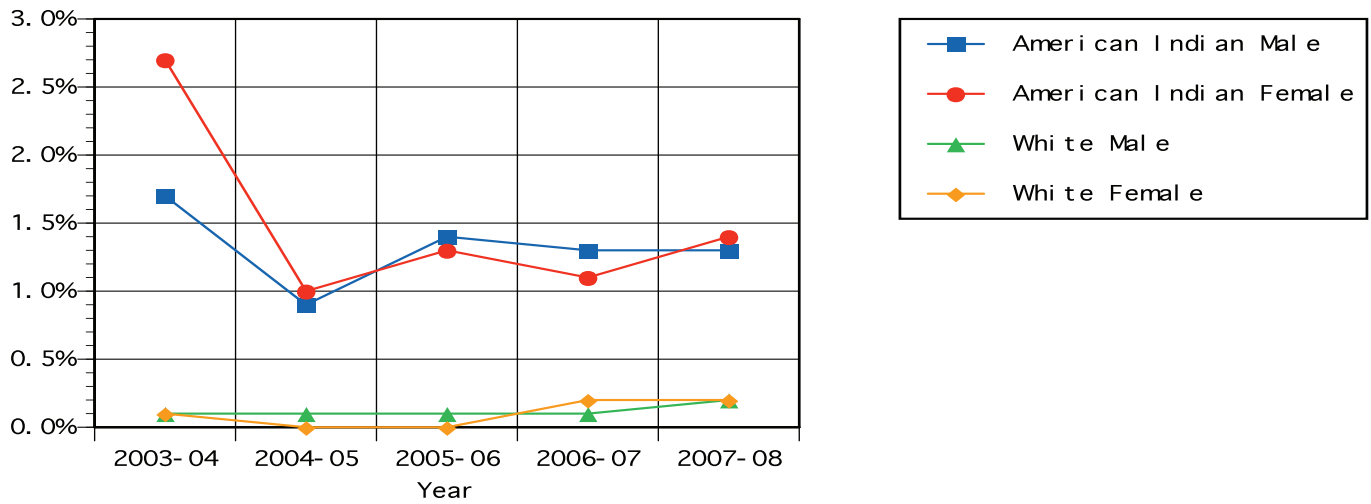
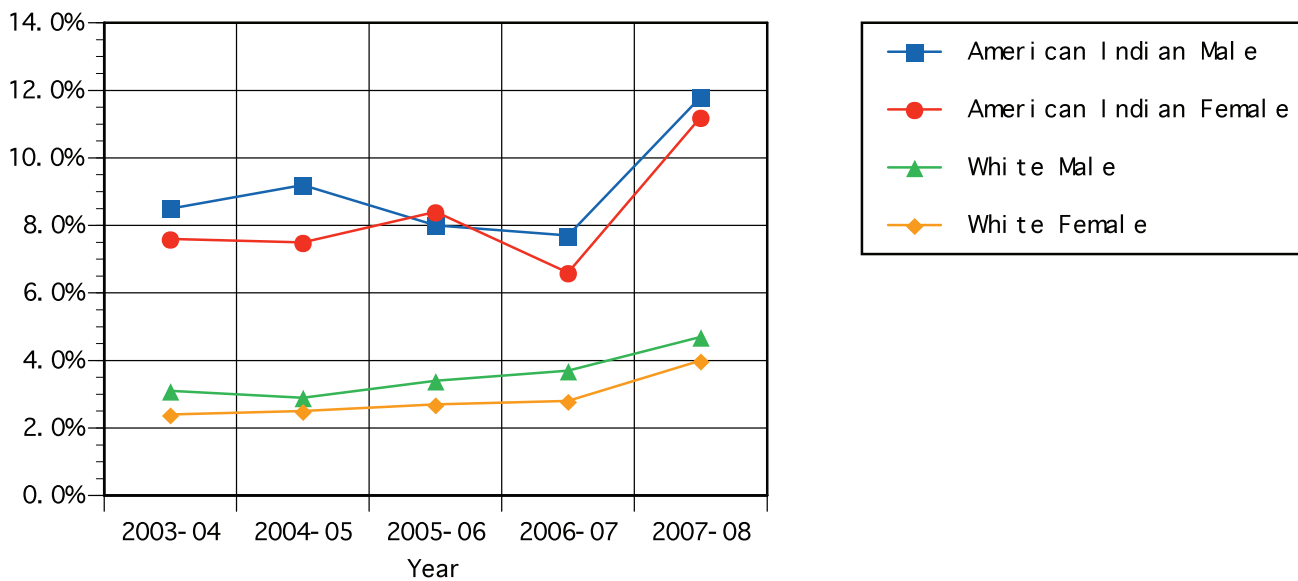


Figure 9: Dropout Rates for Select Race Ethnicity Categories for Gender Grades 9-12



Dropout Rate by Size of District

For the purposes of comparing similarly sized school districts, Montana districts have been identified by size categories based on enrollment numbers.

Category- Elementary Enrollment

1E= more than 2,500 students
2E= 851 to 2,500 students
3E= 401 to 850 students
4E= 151 to 400 students
5E= 41 to 150 students
6E= 40 or fewer students

Category- High School Enrollment

1H= more than 1,250 students
2H= 401 to 1,250 students
3H= 201 to 400 students
4H= 76 to 200 students
5H= 75 or fewer students

Category- K-12 Districts

1K= 400 or more students
2K= 399 or fewer students

Analysis of Dropout Rates by School District Size

- The highest dropout rates for grades 7 through 8 are observed for 3E, districts with enrollments between 401 and 850 students.
- As illustrated in Table 6, on average at the high school level, smaller school districts generally have lower dropout rates than larger districts. The highest dropout rates in 2007-08 were observed for 1H districts, (enrollments larger than 1,250 students). Although, the five year average dropout rate is highest for 2H districts (401 to 1,250 students).
- American Indian dropout rates at the high school level (see Figure 11 on page 15) are highest at 1H districts. American Indian dropout rate is lowest for 1K (400 or more students) districts, 4.3%.
- Over the last five years, increased dropout rates for American Indian students were observed for all size categories except for 3H (201 to 400 students) which stayed the same at 6.2% and 2K (399 or fewer students) dropped from 8.1% to 6.7%.
- For the past five years, 1H districts had the highest dropout rate for American Indian students at 11.9%, but American Indian students make up 5.1% of the 1H enrollment. American Indian students have a dropout rate for 1H districts that is more than three times higher than the rate for White students in 1H districts and is 3.7 percentage points higher than American Indian dropout rate for 2H districts.
- The highest percentage of American Indian students enrolled is in 4H districts at 22.1%. The lowest percentage of American Indian students enrolled is in 1K (400 or more students) at 4.5%.
- American Indian students are one of the more transient subgroups. The implementation of AIM has greatly affected knowing whether they are enrolled.
- At the high school level, the number of dropouts increased for every size category except for students in the 3H category, which went from a five year average of 3.4% to a five year average of 3.3%.
- For White students, the high school dropout rate has increased this year for every size category except for 3H.

Table 6 Montana Dropout Rate by School District Size									
Level	1E,1H	2E,2H	3E,3H	4E,4H	5E,5H	6E	1K	2K	All Schools
<u>7/8 dropouts</u>									
2007-08 rate	0.1%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%
2006-07 rate	0.1%	0.2%	0.8%	0.2%	0.2%	0.8%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%
2005-06 rate	0.1%	0.5%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%
2004-05 rate	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
2003-04 rate	0.2%	0.7%	0.7%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.4%	0.3%
5-yr average rate	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%
<u>HS dropouts</u>									
2007-08 rate	5.7%	5.5%	3.7%	5.1%	3.0%	NA	3.9%	2.6%	5.1%
2006-07 rate	4.5%	4.4%	3.6%	2.2%	1.9%	NA	2.2%	2.0%	3.7%
2005-06 rate	4.4%	4.3%	2.9%	2.4%	0.7%	NA	2.4%	1.9%	3.6%
2004-05 rate	3.4%	4.6%	3.5%	2.7%	0.7%	NA	3.1%	1.7%	3.3%
2003-04 rate	3.6%	3.5%	3.7%	3.0%	2.4%	NA	3.5%	1.5%	3.4%
5-yr average rate	4.3%	4.5%	3.5%	3.1%	1.8%	NA	3.0%	1.9%	3.8%

Figure 10: Five Year Dropout Rates by District Size Category for Select Race/Ethnicity Categories for Grades 7-8

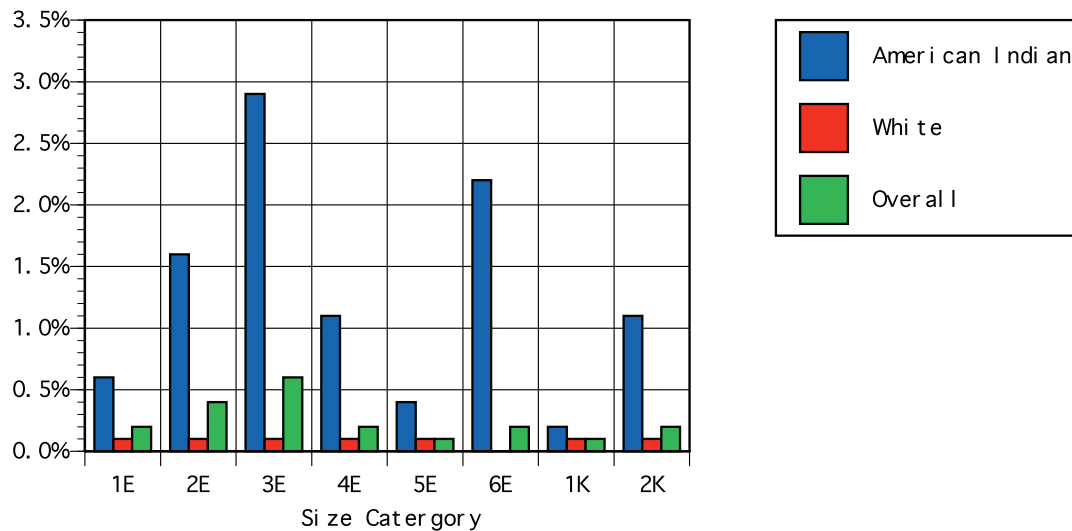
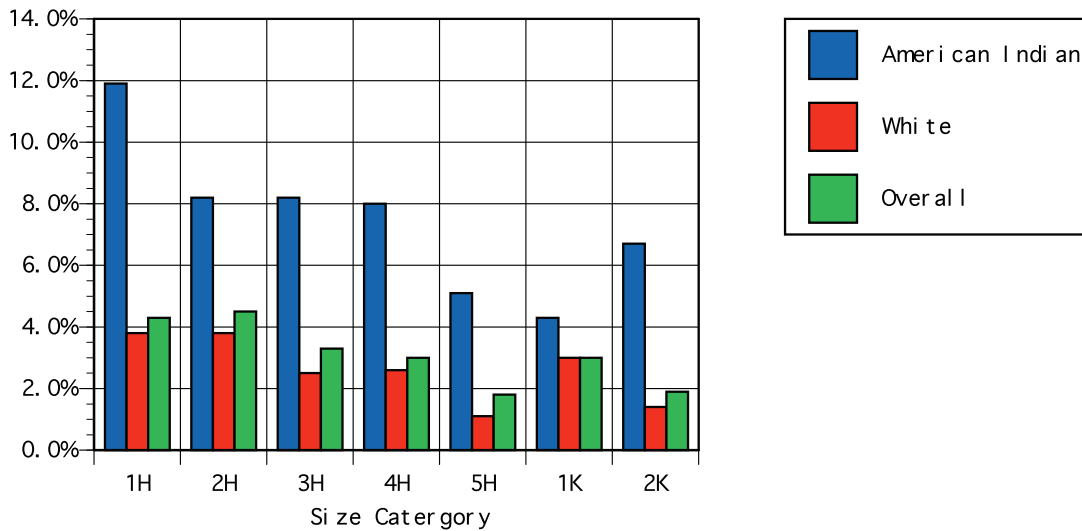


Figure 11: Five Year Dropout Rates by District Size Category for Select Race/Ethnicity Categories for Grades 9 - 12



Other Types of Dropout Indicators— The Completion and Graduation Rate

The dropout rates identified thus far in this report are annual snapshots of grade-by-grade dropouts. The dropout data used to calculate those annual rates can be used in conjunction with graduate data to build a synthetic high school completion rate or “on-time” graduation rate for a specific class of students.

The Completion Rate

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) developed a formula as a practical way to calculate a completion rate after studying a variety of calculation methods.

This estimated cohort method utilizes both dropout and graduate data and can be calculated for all accredited schools, but requires data from four consecutive years.

Analysis of Completion Rates

- The overall completion rate for the Class of 2008 was 84.2% (see Table 7 on page 16).
- For the Class of 2008, females had a higher completion rate (86.0%) than males (82.5%).
- The race/ethnicity categories of Asian, Hispanic, Black, and Pacific Islander accounted for only 3.7% of the 2007-08 graduates and 4.8% of the dropouts over four years. Therefore, as with dropout rates, the completion rates for these race/ethnicity categories tend to vary widely from year to year.
- The Class of 2008 completion rate for the American Indian race/ethnicity category was considerably lower than the statewide completion rate and that of the White category.

Completion Rate Formula

$$\text{Completion Rate} = \text{ct} / (\text{ct} + \text{d12t} + \text{d11(t-1)} + \text{d10(t-2)} + \text{d9(t-3)})$$

Where:

c= number of graduates receiving a high school diploma in 4 years + nonstandard graduates

t= year of graduation

d= dropouts

12, 11, 10, 9 = class level

Example:

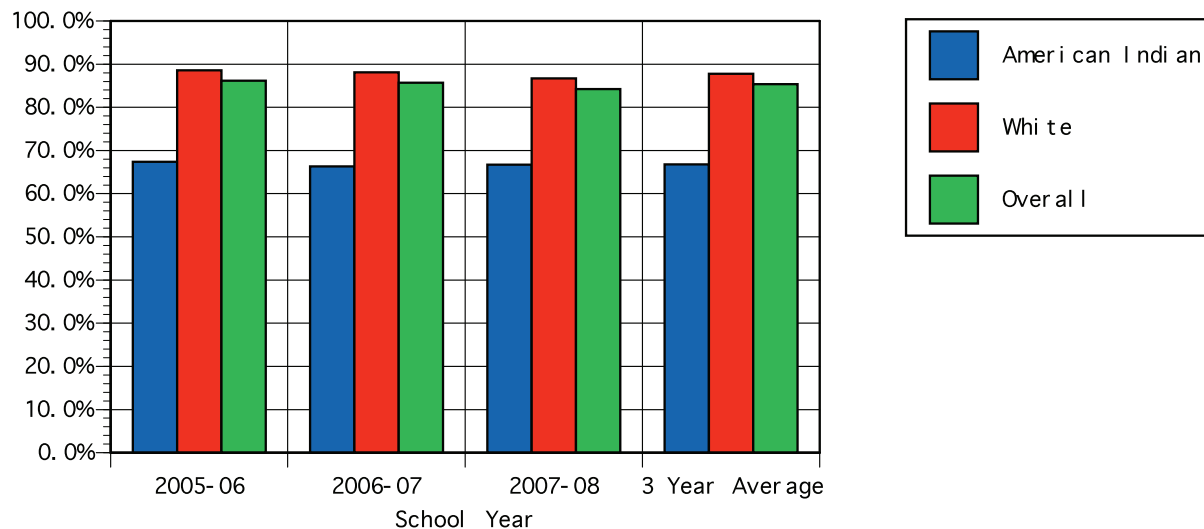
The 2007-08 Completion Rate for Montana High Schools = 10,713 graduates for Class of 2008 divided by (2,006 students dropped out over four years plus 10,713 Graduates for the Class of 2008) multiplied by 100 = 84.2 %

- As illustrated below in Figure 12, American Indian students had a three-year average completion rate of 66.8%, lower than the White average of 87.8 %.
- Completion rates for American Indian students increased this year after decreasing last year. Decreased completion rates were observed for White students for 2007-08.

Table 7
2007-08 Montana Completion Rate Summary

	Dropouts					Graduates 2007-08	Completion Rate
	Grade 9 2004-05	Grade 10 2005-06	Grade 11 2006-07	Grade 12 2007-08	4-yr Dropout Total		
Overall Total	342	422	512	730	2,006	10,713	84.2%
Gender							
Male	200	236	295	407	1,138	5,366	82.5%
Female	142	186	217	323	868	5,347	86.0%
Race/Ethnicity							
American Indian	131	110	91	138	470	943	66.7%
Asian	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	129	94.2%
Hispanic	12	14	26	18	70	202	74.3%
Black	<10	<10	<10	<10	15	51	77.3%
Pacific Islander	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	15	83.3%
White	196	292	388	564	1,440	9,374	86.7%

Figure 12: Completion Rates



The Adequate Yearly Progress Graduation Rate

Graduation rate, defined as “the percentage of students who graduate from secondary school with a regular diploma in the standard number of years” (i.e., “on-time”), is the required additional indicator for public high schools in AYP determinations. Montana’s U.S. Department of Education-approved high school graduation rate is an estimated cohort group rate based on the method recommended by the NCES. Public high schools must have a graduation rate for the “All Students Combined” subgroup of at least 80% or make improvement towards this goal to meet this indicator. Montana’s graduation rate is calculated using the formula in the box to the right. Montana’s student information system (AIM) will assign each student a cohort when they start 9th grade and they will not be allowed to change cohorts.

AYP Graduation Rate Formula

$$\text{Graduation Rate} = \frac{gt}{ct + gt + d12t + d11(t-1) + d10(t-2) + d9(t-3)}$$

Where:

g= number of graduates receiving a standard high school diploma in four years or less (from the time enrolled in the 9th grade) or had an IEP allowing for more than four years to graduate.

c= completers of high school by other means

t= year of graduation

d= dropouts

12, 11, 10, 9 = class level

Example:

The 2007-08 Graduation Rate for Montana Public High Schools =

10,231 “On-time” Graduates for Class of 2008 divided by (1,989 students dropped out over four years plus 165 Not “On-time” Graduates for the Class of 2008 plus 10,231 “On-time” Graduates for the Class of 2008) multiplied by 100 = 82.6 %

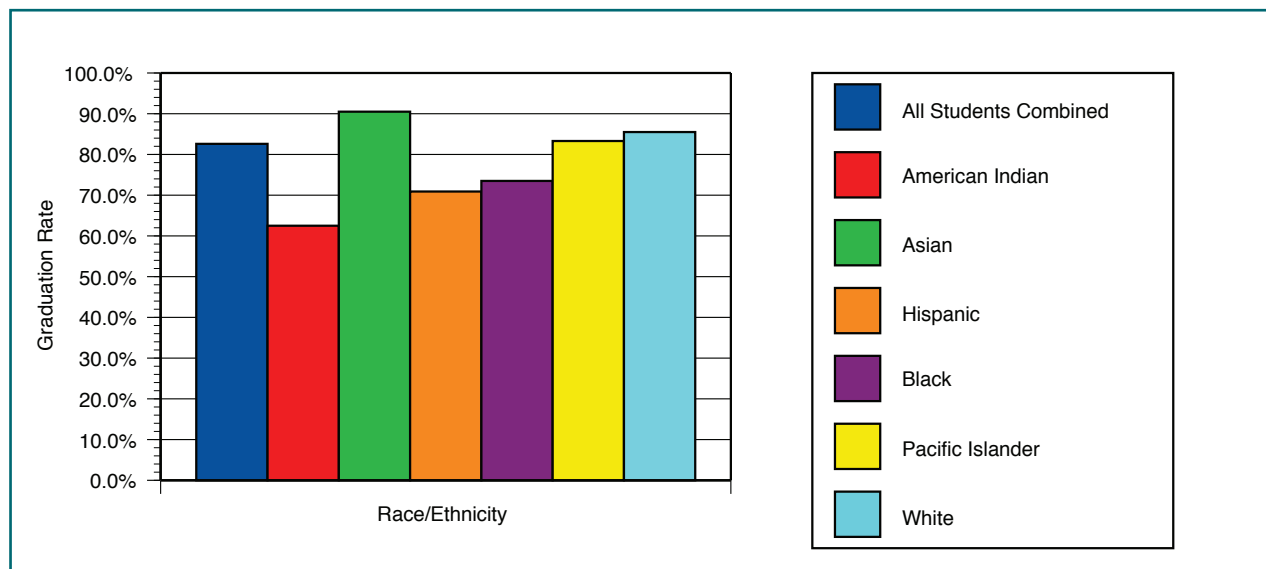
Analysis of AYP Graduation Rates

- The Class of 2008 AYP Graduation Rate for “All Students Combined” was 82.6% (see Table 8 and Figure 13 on following page).
- Disaggregated graduation rates are not used for determinations on this indicator; however, for the Class of 2008, the American Indian graduation rate was considerably lower than any of the subgroups. Therefore, schools with predominantly American Indian enrollment may find it more difficult to meet the 80% percent goal.
- Although graduate and dropout data for the 2007-08 school year has been collected by the OPI, individual school and district AYP determinations, which use these data for the 2008-09 school year, will not be made until August of 2009.

Table 8
Montana Public High School AYP Graduation Rate for the Class of 2008

Subgroups	Dropouts					Graduates 2007-08		AYP Graduation Rate
	Grade 9 2004-05	Grade 10 2005-06	Grade 11 2006-07	Grade 12 2007-08	4-yr Dropout Total	Not On-time or GED	On-time	
All Students Combined	334	417	512	726	1,989	165	10,231	82.6%
American Indian	124	107	91	137	459	52	852	62.5%
Asian	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	4	114	90.5%
Hispanic	12	14	26	18	70	6	185	70.9%
Black	<10	<10	<10	<10	15	3	50	73.5%
Pacific Islander	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	0	15	83.3%
White	195	290	388	561	1,434	100	9,015	85.5%

Figure 13: Montana Public High School AYP Graduation rates for All Students Combined and Race/Ethnicity (School Year 2007-08)



What Helps Prevent Students from Dropping Out?

At the conclusion of *The Silent Epidemic, Perspectives of High School Dropouts*, the authors devised a 10 point plan to reduce the number of dropouts in America. These 10 points are similar to the findings of other groups working to reduce dropout rates and increase high school completion rates:

- 1) Support methods that collect and disseminate accurate dropout and graduation data;
- 2) Have distant early warning procedures in place to keep track of and provide extra guidance to students who are most likely to dropout;
- 3) Provide adult advocates and student support for students most at need;
- 4) Increase parental engagement and provide individual graduation plans;
- 5) Encourage rigorous curriculum for graduation for all students, not just those bound for college. The curriculum should be tough enough that graduates are job and college ready when they graduate;
- 6) Suggest options for struggling students such as ninth grade academies, alternative schools, or individual instruction plans;
- 7) Consider raising the compulsory age requirement from 16 to 17 or 18. During the 2009 Montana Legislative Session a bill was introduced to raise the compulsory age to 17, but that bill was defeated;
- 8) Expand college level learning opportunities at the high school level such as dual enrollment and Advanced Placement (AP) classes;
- 9) Research and follow best practices; and,
- 10) Make dropout prevention a national priority.

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Additional Dropout Resources on the Web

National Center for Education Statistics- <http://www.nces.ed.gov/>

National Dropout Prevention Center/Network- <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/>

U. S. Census Bureau- <http://www.census.gov/index.html>

The Silent Epidemic- <http://www.silentepidemic.org/>

Alliance for Excellent Education- <http://www.all4ed.org/>

The Montana Office of Public Instruction, Denise Juneau, Superintendent

